

2nd Brigade holds the line

Story and photos by Rebecca F. Deuel
1st Armored Division PAO

BAUMHOLDER, Germany—Sweat beaded on Spc. Jose Contreras's forehead as he watched two men carrying an apparently wounded man toward the checkpoint. Another language familiar to him was spoken rapidly, and the two men gestured from the wounded man to the gate where he stood. He looked over his shoulder to 1st Lt. Stanley Overstreet and repeated the man's words in English, then waited for an answer from the checkpoint OIC. Overstreet nodded to Contreras and the two soldiers stepped aside as the guards from Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery pulled the concertina wire out of the roadway. Two soldiers stepped through and made their way cautiously toward the wounded man in the road under the watchful eyes of several other soldiers in their unit. When they finally reached the injured man, the concealed rioters down the road howled madly and charged the open barricades.

This was only one of several scenarios in a training-packed four days of Initial Readiness Training at Baumholder, Germany's Conqueror's Park. The training was hosted by 2nd Brigade as a mandatory requirement for the soldiers that will deploy as the second part of 1st Armored Division's rotation in Kosovo, beginning late this fall.

"It's [IRT] pretty important," said Staff Sgt. Tim Bolyard, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment section sergeant and IRT instructor. "Most of the brigade will be manning checkpoints or at least pulling guard duty at the gates of the U.S. compounds. It will deter terrorist activity, and also protect and save lives down there."

The Initial Readiness Training was a four-day event. Day one covered the inprocessing of the soldiers and briefings on rules of engagement and deadly force by the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate General and other agencies. Day two began station and lane training. Civil disturbance lanes trained the soldiers in riot and crowd control. React-to-contact lanes exposed them to indirect fire, ambushes, snipers, minefields and medical evacuation procedures. At the checkpoint lanes,

troops learned how to conduct vehicle and personnel searches, document and personnel processing and checkpoint operations. Soldiers were then exposed to mock interviews, flashing cameras, and fast-talking reporters during the react-to-media training.

The scenario unfolded as the Quick Reaction Force armed with riot shields and batons tried to move the "rioters" from the

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checkpoint area using one of many riot-control formations they learned in lane training. Sgt. Jack Anderson, IRT instructor from 501st Military Police Company in Bad Kreuznach, shouted "Maintain your line! Get back on line!" at the wobbly QRF soldiers who struggled against the wave of rioters.

The IRT training soldiers received put a different perspective on many military tasks. The combat soldier has taken on the additional role of the peacekeeper in past years. "It's completely different," said Spc. Allen Caldwell, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, about the role of the modern soldier. "We go from actual fighting—actual battle—to keeping the peace and keeping down civil unrest."

The training was a brigade requirement for the soldiers deploying to Kosovo later this year, and was scheduled to run through September. Leaders in units throughout 2nd Brigade will continue training soldiers in peacekeeping tasks related to the upcoming rotation at unit, platoon and squad levels in continuing preparation for the upcoming mission.



Spc. Jerry Turner, HHC, 1-35 Armor Battalion, scrutinizes the engine compartment of a suspicious vehicle during IRT in Baumholder. His diligent search revealed a carefully hidden booby-trap explosive.



Protecting his squad leader from a rioter's blow, a soldier from Battery B, 4-27 Field Artillery, struggles to hold his position in the control line during a civil-uprising scenario.



A soldier snarls through his riot shield at the roleplaying rioter while he maintains his position in the control line during the React-to-contact lane training.